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ABSTRACT

This research intended to describe interventions to enhance students' motivation to read for enjoyment. Students' personal reasons for reading may include curiosity, social involvements, emotional satisfaction and/or necessity. Other reasons for reading may include: sustained involvement; challenge; compliance; recognition; competition; and work avoidance. When reading motivation is lacking, the extent of the learner's active involvement and attitude toward learning in general wanes. Many students in the focus first, third, and fifth grade groups exhibited a lack of motivation to read for pleasure. Probable causes for this low motivation to read for pleasure included a lack of: materials, models, previous enjoyable experiences, or self perceived competence. The following solutions were expanded upon: an abundance and variety of books in the classroom; a teacher who actively models reading behaviors; a book-friendly classroom environment; opportunities for interactions with others; and parent involvement. The study results showed students were more positively motivated to read for pleasure and were engaged in doing so. Students chose to read when given a choice. Students were more excited and eager to share what they have read with others. Appendixes contain: the parent survey, the reading survey, motivation to read profiles, a checklist for student involvement with literature, and a checklist for promoting literature through teaching activities. (Contains 42 references and 8 figures.) (Author/RS)

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MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO READ FOR ENJOYMENT

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Susan White

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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Field-Based Masters Program

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ABSTRACT

Our research intended to describe interventions to enhance students' motivation to read for enjoyment. Students' personal reasons for reading may include curiosity, social involvements, emotional satisfaction and/or necessity. Other reasons for reading may include sustained involvement, challenge, compliance, recognition, competition, and work avoidance. When reading motivation is lacking, the extent of the learner's active involvement and attitude toward learning in general wanes. Many students in the focus first, third, and fifth grade groups exhibited a lack of motivation to read for pleasure.

Probable causes for this low motivation to read for pleasure included a lack of: materials, models, previous enjoyable experiences, or self perceived competence.

We expanded upon the following solutions: an abundance and variety of books in the classroom, a teacher who actively models reading behaviors, a book-friendly classroom environment, opportunities for interactions with others, and parent involvement.

We saw that students were more positively motivated to read for pleasure and were engaged in doing so. Students chose to read when given a choice. Students were more excited and eager to share what they have read with others.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

Many of the students of the targeted first, third, and fifth grade classes exhibited a lack of interest or desire to read. Evidence of this problem was apparent through reading records, parent surveys, student surveys, and teacher observations.

This study took place at three separate grade levels, located in two separate sites. The schools will be referred to as Site A and Site B, with classrooms referred to as Classroom I, Classroom III, and Classroom V. All of the classrooms reported informational data from the 1999-2000 school report card.

Immediate Problem Context: Site A

Site A was a public elementary school that served 479 students enrolled in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. The ethnic breakdown of the student population included 37.2% Caucasian, 53.9% African-American, 5.7% Hispanic, 2.8% Asian American, and 0.4% Native American. The school included 7.3% of students with limited English proficiency. Approximately 78.4% of the student population came from low- income homes. By district definition, low income referred to students who came from families who were receiving public

aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, or may have been eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches.

Each grade level was heterogeneously divided into two classes, with the exception of kindergarten and first grades, which had three such classrooms. The average class size for fifth grade was 23.1 students. The school's student attendance rate was 92.8% with a 16.5% mobility rate. The chronic truancy rate at 21.5% represented the 18 students who were absent from school without valid cause for 10% or more of the school year. Despite the relatively high truancy rate, 100% of students' parents/guardians had personal contact with school staff during the school year, by way of conferences, school visits, home visits, telephone conversations, and/or written communications.

The elementary and middle school programs were combined within this magnet school facility. The school was originally built in 1940 as a junior high school. The facility included a large gymnasium, an unused swimming pool, a large auditorium, and a large school cafeteria.

The building staff consisted of 71 staff members, and of the total staff there were 60.6% certified staff and 39.4 % non-certified staff. The certified staff consisted of: 46.5% classroom teachers, 11.7% specialists (art, two music classes, creative movement, and physical education), 7% special education educators, 7% Title I teachers, and 4.7% are administrators (one principle and one assistant principal). The following 16.1% of the certified staff members consisted of a curriculum facilitator, early childhood instructors, television lab instructor, guidance counselor, librarian, nurse, and psychologist. Fifty percent of the certified staff members held a Master's degree.

The focus of this school's magnet program was communication. Students learned to incorporate computers in their development of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills that

contributed to their lifestyles and future careers. Effective communication taught the students to maintain eye contact and to speak in complete sentences. The magnet program was developed as a result of a remedial court order from the community's desegregation lawsuit against the district.

This site offered two class sections of special education students. One was for elementary students (fourth, fifth and sixth grade) the second was for middle school students. The two special education classes addressed the needs of students who were mentally impaired, learning disordered, and behavior disordered.

The philosophy, as stated in this site's mission statement, was the key to its magnet theme. The school "will provide a strong academic program using the arts and technology to build communication skills and enhance self-esteem and confidence in oral, written, interpersonal and intercultural communication. Students will develop learning skills and competencies that contribute to lifestyles and careers."

Organized evening school activities such as Family Reading Night, Lighted Libraries, and the Technology Fair encouraged reading outside of school hours. Site A encouraged reading growth by offering Title I and Reading Recovery services to students who qualified for special services. The reading series, used by Site A, Harcourt Brace, also encouraged reading growth, in the classroom, by offering Guided Reading Libraries that ranged in skill levels.

The importance of building relationships with local businesses and organizations as school partners was very critical to the site as well as to the community. This site promised to maintain an equitable balance of enrollment between minority and majority students as specified by this district's remedial court order on desegregation.

Immediate Problem Context: Site B

Site B was a public elementary school that served 305 students enrolled in kindergarten through fifth grade. The ethnic breakdown of the student population included 48.9% Caucasian, 41.6% African American, 8.2% Hispanic and 1.3% Asian American. The school included 2.6% of students with limited English proficiency. Seventy-nine percent of the student population came from low-income homes, which by district definition referred to students receiving public aid, living in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, supported in foster homes, or eligible to receive free or reduced lunches.

Each grade level was heterogeneously divided into two classes, with the exception of first grade, which had three such classrooms. The average class size for first and third grades, respectively, were 17.3 students and 24.5 students. The school's student attendance rate was 91.9%, with a 14.7% mobility rate. The chronic truancy rate of 8.7% represented 26 students who were absent from school without valid cause for 10% of the school year. Despite the relatively high truancy rate, 100% of students' parents/guardians had personal contact with school staff during the school year, by way of conferences, school visits, home visits, telephone conversations, and/or written communication.

The staff of Site B consisted of 25 certified teachers overseen by one full-time principal. The certified staff included: 13 classroom teachers, a reading implementer, a student support specialist, two Title I teachers, two Success For All teachers/tutors, two resource teachers, a social worker, a psychologist, a speech-language therapist, a parent liaison, and three part-time teachers of music, art, and physical education. The teaching experience ranged from four to 27 years, including fifteen teachers with Masters' degrees.

Other members of the school staff consisted of a paraprofessional in the library, one in the computer lab, one in each kindergarten room, one who worked with students needing remediation, and two who assisted inclusion students. Other employees of the site included two lunch aides, two food service workers, a building engineer, and a night custodian.

The philosophy of Site B was to provide a foundation of knowledge to students in a positive, caring, safe, and orderly environment that encouraged optimal individual growth, and a desire for life-long learning. Some of the programs that the school offered to the students were Success For All, Book Buddies, Accelerated Reader, and Book Club.

Success For All was a reading program developed by Robert Slavin and Nancy Madden of John Hopkins University. The program was designed to ensure that at-risk children would be reading. The program was highly structured and was taught in 90-minute reading blocks daily. Children were broken into homogeneous reading groups and assessed every eight weeks. This assessment allowed for student mobility to a higher or lower group as needed. The average number of students in a reading group was 15. The most skill deficient first graders were provided with 20-minute tutoring sessions each day. When students attained basic reading skills, tutoring was discontinued. Students were expected to read for 20-minutes each night and return a Read and Response assignment sheet signed by an adult. Each quarter, students who read at least eighty percent of the quarter, attended a RAH (Read At Home) Reception, to enjoy cake, ice cream, and recognition.

Book Buddies were partnerships established between a primary class and an intermediate class. Primary students paired up with intermediate students and read, or were read to by an older student. This partnership provided the younger student with support and the older student with confidence in reading.

Accelerated Reader is a computerized system, which tested students on pre-selected books, and awarded points as students passed these tests. As the reading level of selected material increased, so did the point value. Students collected points to earn prizes.

The Surrounding Community

Both sites were located within the same school district, in a large mid-western state, in a community that was considered to be both metropolitan yet rural. The population of this community was 356,887. Of this population, 85% were Caucasian, 8.06% were African-American, 4.7% were Hispanic, 1.4% were Asian, 0.3% were Native American, and 2.1% were of another origin. The median household income for this community was $38,197, with a per capita income of $25,938. Households earning $10,000 or less comprised 10.4% of the total community, with 25% of its total households being single-parent families. Of the 65,168 employable persons 16 years of age or older, 56.1% were in white collar/clerical jobs, and 30.3% in blue-collar jobs. The unemployment rate was 4.5%. There were 211,894 people aged 25 or older, and of this age group, 36.1% were high school graduate level only, 18.7% had some college education, and 15.6% had earned a college degree or higher.

Some features of this community that enhanced the quality of life for its residents included over 100 parks, pools, and golf courses; a civic center; several sports facilities; more than 20 theatres, museums, and galleries; eight public libraries; and over 400 churches, synagogues, and mosques. Among the many retail establishments in the community there were approximately 20 bookstores.

The school district served 36,844 students in 41 elementary (K-5), six middle (6-8), and four high (9-12) schools. The elementary schools included ten designated as "magnet" schools,

each with a specific academic focus. The ethnic breakdown of the student population included 53% Caucasian students, 30.5% African-American,13.1% Hispanic, 3.1% Asian, and 0.2% Native American. Students with limited English proficiency made up 8.2% of the district's student population. Students coming from low-income homes made up 52.6%. It also served 257 inclusion students, who were mentally impaired and received one-on-one paraprofessional assistance in their classrooms. The average size for first grade classrooms in this district was 19.7 students; for third it was 21.8; and for fifth grade it was 26.2. The district's attendance rate was 91.4%, with a 15.8% mobility rate, and a chronic truancy rate of 11.9%

The school district was functioning under a federal court order that mandated its operation. In 1989, as a result of closing ten schools, a grass-roots group known as "People Who Care" filed a lawsuit. In 1993, a U.S. Federal District Court heard the case, and in 1994, Judge Stanley J. Roszkowski found the district guilty on 11 counts of willful and intentional discrimination against its African-American and Hispanic students. These included: 1) student tracking and ability grouping; 2) within school segregation; 3) student assignment; 4) faculty and equipment disparity; 5) employment disparities; 6) staff assignment; 7) transportation; 8) extracurricular activities; 9) bilingual education; 10) special education; and 11) composition of the Board of Education. The judge ordered the school district to begin implementing remedies that would both eliminate racial/ethnic discrimination against minorities, and provide equitable education to all students (Mahoney's Choice, March 1996).

National Context

When people walk into a classroom during reading time, they will notice most of the students engaged in various forms of reading. They will also inevitably observe that there are

several students doing any number of other non-reading, non-assigned activities. They may wonder why.

We know as educators that the more we read, the better we read. Avid readers improve their reading fluency, acquire new vocabulary, absorb knowledge of the world, and even heighten their intelligence. (Reading Teacher Magazine, vol. 54, #2) Yet many students often choose not to read. Despite the benefits of reading for practice, many teachers spend much energy teaching and emphasizing the skill of reading, but devote a decreasing amount of time to this practice reading and/or to reading for enjoyment. For the student, this may put a negative connotation on the importance of the reading itself.

Research has shown that when students are "...ranked according to the amount of reading they do, students in the top five percent read 144 times more than students in the bottom five percent." (Patterns of Reading Practice booklet,1996) Although achievement is important, we cannot forget as educators, or students, that reading is not simply an isolated exercise, but an enjoyable activity to be experienced with others, and can actually be exhilarating. (Reading Teacher Magazine, vol. 53, #3)

Furthermore, the problem of students choosing not to read is not simply limited to specific grade levels, although the general attitude about reading does decline during the elementary years, and even becomes quite negative in the upper grades. (Reading Teacher Magazine, vol. 53, #3) The result may be even further detachment from pleasure reading.

Researcher's Perspective: Classroom V

In my fifth grade classroom there was a wide variety of reading levels. It ranged from very dependent readers, to readers who needed prompting. The frustration in this classroom was

the lack of interest in reading. There were many opportunities for students to read at their own pace and at their own reading level.

The students were given 40 minutes of Guided Reading and 30 minutes of D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything And Read) time every day. During Guided Reading I gave the students specific books to read. I noticed that the students tended to "space out", talk or say they were done in an unreasonable amount of time. In contrast, D.E.A.R. time allowed the students to choose a book of their own interest. While observing students at this time, they demonstrated more interest in the book; they were more focused, and much quieter.

These methods were put into effect to encourage students to read. However, it seemed like reading for enjoyment was a thing of the past. It was very frustrating to hear students complaining that they had to read. The reasons I heard for not wanting to read were, "I don't understand it", "it's too long", or my favorite "it's too boring". I do believe that for some students it was too hard, which can make the book boring. As a result, I have also observed that my students talked or daydreamed when they were reading and could not get into the book.

I had tried different strategies to get my students to read. I was at the point of frustration at their lack of excitement and lack of interest in reading. I felt that it was a shame that television and video games had taken place of a good book.

Researcher's Perspective: Classroom I

Typical of the national problem was my own first grade classroom. It consisted of 15 students, with ten girls and five boys; eight Caucasian students, five African-American, and two Hispanic. The skills and ability levels of these students ranged from quite below to well above grade-level. The barometer I used to determine this range was the basic set of curricula the

district had asked me to teach, and how I observed and felt that the students had done in acquiring and applying it. One student was a chronic truant, which had affected her academic achievement greatly. Another came from a home in which limited English was spoken, which probably had some bearing on her "below grade-level" achievement in school. A third student, who was especially low in skills and ability, was a mentally impaired inclusion student who received special pull-out services in both math and language arts/reading from our building's resource teacher several times a week.

The homework given weekly in my classroom was typical of the first grades in our building. It consisted of three to four math assignments per week; two to three spelling; and 20-minutes of reading nightly, as per the Success For All reading program our school uses.

I found this latter situation especially bothersome, as mine was designated the top "beginning reading" (first grade) group in our building. It was filled with children who were comfortably at or well above grade-level in ability, and who should have been able to pick-up and read with ease any first-grade level book, yet chose not to do so. Despite this seemingly bleak situation, there did exist several students within the reading class who chose to read not only from the assigned book(s), but from a variety of other sources, as well, such as their own books, library books, comics, newspapers, and magazines. In my position as their teacher, I tried to reiterate that the more they read the better readers they will become. On this same note, I wished that I could capture the enthusiasm of these few and dole it out to the other less enthusiastic students so that they might enjoy the same success in reading.

Researcher's Perspective: Classroom III

My classroom of 24 students was broken down heterogeneously into six groups of four students. Each group worked at a rectangular table, rather than at desks, to help foster cooperative learning. Students shared one large bucket for supplies. Each student had his own drawer for additional supplies. Each table had a basket that contained 15 books, at varying reading levels, provided for reading as time allowed.

Various centers were located throughout the room. One center was a small library from which students could check out books. Several books were displayed on the dry erase board ledge for students to browse.

The class went to the school library once each week for 30 minutes. Students who returned previously checked out books could check out new books. Students who lost books could not check out new ones until the others were returned. Some students had not been able to check out books since the beginning of the school year.

Many of the students did not select reading as a free time activity. A few students who were at or above grade level in reading chose reading as an activity. In fact, some of these students needed to be asked to put their books away when we were learning a new skill. As a whole, the students did not enjoy reading as a leisure activity.

Many students completed their Read and Respond homework, which involved reading for 20-minutes each night. Even some of the most capable readers did not complete their reading homework. Contacting parents and sending books home had yet to improve the return of homework.

Overall, I felt like I was constantly searching for solutions to help spark an interest in reading, which in the long run would improve students' skills in reading.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

The focus group for this research included a first grade, third grade, and fifth grade class. These students demonstrated a lack of motivation to read for pleasure in such ways as daydreaming, being off-task, and/or not choosing books as a free choice activity. Evidence of this problem was shown through parent surveys, student surveys, checklists and teacher observation.

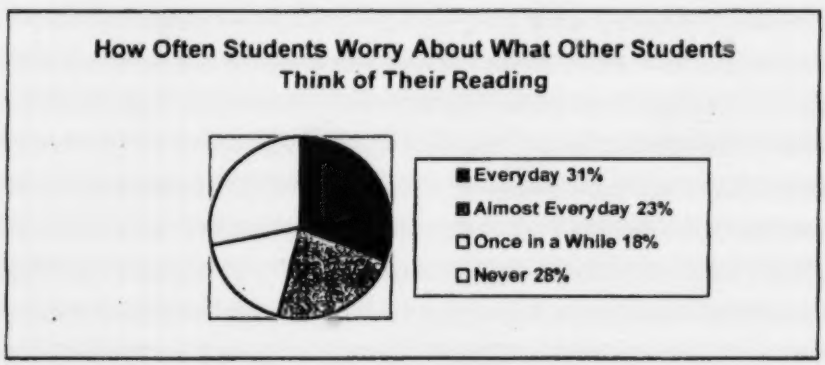
Students and parents completed surveys in early September to document this problem. The parent surveys (See Appendix A) reflected their attitudes toward and habits of reading and encouraging reading at home. The student surveys (Motivation to Read Profile, Parts 1 and 2, see Appendix B) reflected their own individual feelings, values, and interest in reading.

Based on the evidence gathered from the parent survey, the student surveys, and the teacher checklist (See Appendix C), two significant causes for the problem emerged. These were low self concept as readers and a low value of reading stemming from lack of materials, previous enjoyable experiences, and/or materials. Evidence of students' low self-concept in reading became apparent in the student survey. Item seven stated, "When I am reading by myself, I understand_____." Fifty-one percent of students admitted that they only

understood some, or less than some, of what they read. In addition, on item five, "When I come to a word I don't know, I can _____," sixty-seven percent admitted to having difficulty figuring out words they did not know. These pieces of data indicated that students had difficulty reading. Question nine stated, "I am _____," and showed that thirty-six percent labeled themselves as a poor or an O.K. reader. These data seemed to indicate that when students had difficulty reading, their self-concept as readers suffered.

Furthermore, question eleven which read, "I worry about what other kids think about my reading _____," indicated that more than half of the three classrooms were concerned everyday or almost everyday about what their peers thought of their reading skills.

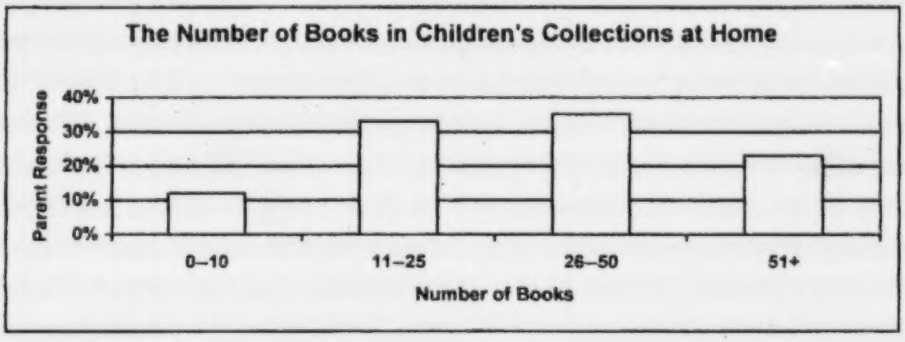
FIGURE 1


How Often Students Worry About What Other Students Think of Their Reading
Everyday 31%
Almost Everyday 23%
Once in a While 18%
Never 28%

If students had a low self-concept and were not comfortable reading alone or with their peers, they might be less willing to choose reading for pleasure as an activity.

Evidence from the survey tools indicated that the students of the classrooms surveyed experienced a low value of reading stemming from a lack of materials. When parents were asked on item fifteen of their survey, "How many books are in your child's book collection at home?" results showed that students only had access to a very limited number of books.

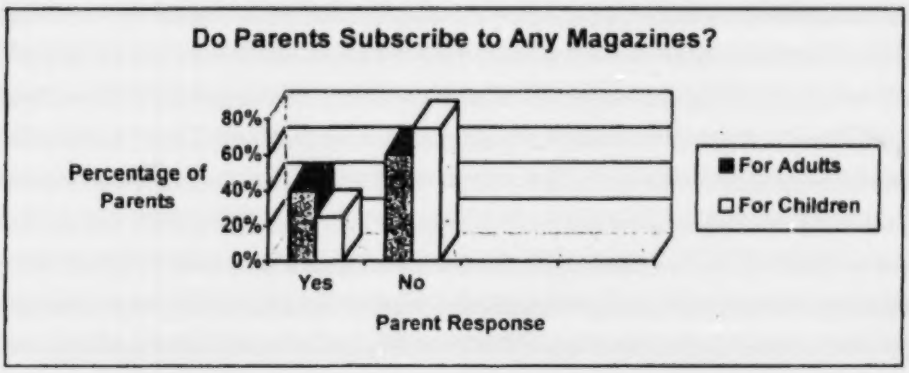
FIGURE 2



This lack of materials in theory could have a major impact on a child's ability to choose to read or make choices about what to read.

Items twelve and thirteen of the survey asked parents, "Do you subscribe to any magazines..." Overwhelmingly, sixty percent of parents answered, "No" to magazines for adults and seventy-five percent answered, "No" to magazines for children.

FIGURE 3



In addition to the lack of books at home, students had very few reading materials at home from which to choose.

Despite this lack of materials, forty-nine percent of the parents admitted on question number eight of the parent survey, "Do you visit your local public library?" that they did not. In addition, parents were asked, "How often do you give books as gifts?" Forty-two percent

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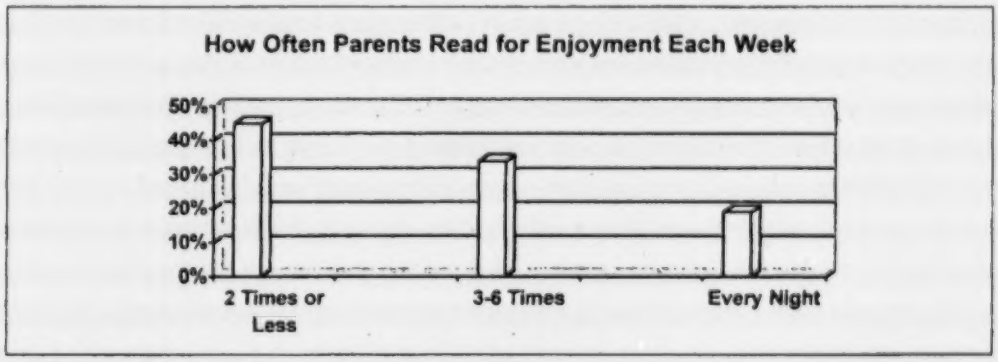
said never or almost never. Due to the lack of materials in the household, students seem to have difficulty deciding what to read. Coincidentally, forty-six percent of the students answered, "No" when asked on the student survey, part two, question number six, "Can you think of anything right now that you would like to read?"

Evidence from the survey instruments indicated that when parents did not actively model positive reading behaviors, it further contributed to the lack of motivation to read for enjoyment. For example, when parents were asked on item number two of the parent survey, "How often do you read for enjoyment?" almost half claimed that they do so two times or less each week. This is an indication that many families did not highly prioritize reading.

FIGURE 4



Regardless of this, the time that families make for reading impacts children in a positive way. When asked on student survey, part two, number eight, "Who gets you excited about reading?" overwhelmingly students named some family member.

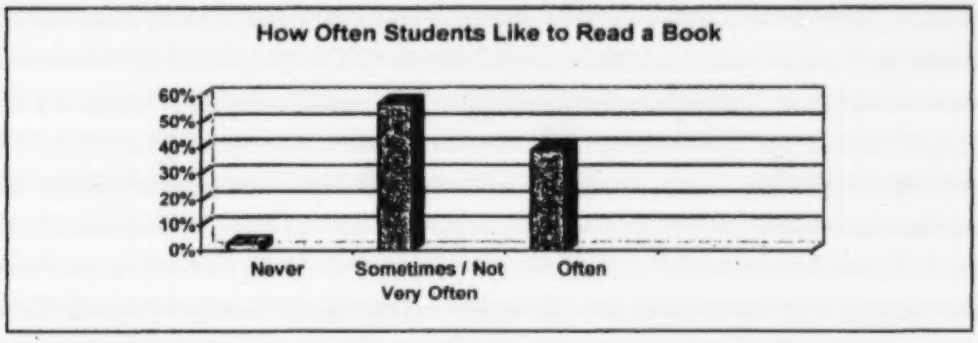
Because a lack of models existed at home, teachers should have been demonstrating positive reading habits at school. However, they were not. Five important items on the teacher checklist stood out as evidence. Teachers did not read high quality literature aloud daily. They did not show students how to select books, nor did they introduce books regularly through book talks. Despite its important modeling implication, teachers did not

read during silent reading time. And finally, teachers did not reach beyond the classroom to send read aloud suggestions to parents. By viewing some of the same bad habits at school that they witnessed at home, students may have received the impression that reading was not important.

Additional evidence from the surveys, showed that students had not enjoyed adequate previous positive experiences with reading. Parents were asked on item number three of the parent survey, "How often do you read with your child?" Forty-two percent admitted that they only did so twice each week or less. More so, seventy percent of the parents surveyed responded, "No" when asked on item number eleven, "Do you have a reading area at home?" These two facts indicated that few students have had the chance at home to experience reading in an enjoyable manner.

Whereas the teacher could have provided experiences at school, once again the teacher checklist indicated otherwise. Most importantly, time was not provided for self-choice reading everyday at school. Also, students were not given the opportunity to share responses to books with peers. Indeed, forty-three percent of students responding to the survey, part one, number six, which read "I tell my friends about good books I read," claimed that they never or almost never did this, indicating that they had not taken the chance to socially experience books. On the student survey, part one, question number two, few students shared that "Reading a book is something that I like to do...often."

FIGURE 5



This seemed to reflect the previously mentioned notion that without positive reading experiences, students were less likely to categorize reading as an enjoyable activity. Additionally, a majority of students responded with, "I don't know" or "Nothing" when asked on student survey, part two, number seven, "What gets you really excited about reading?"

In conclusion, the survey responses indicated an overall low value of reading in general. When asked on student survey, part two, number one, "Did you read anything at home yesterday?" fifty-six percent of the students admitted that they had not. Mirroring this was number seventeen on the parent survey, which asked, "How often does your child read at home?" Only forty percent of the parents responded every night. Additionally, teachers observed on the teacher checklist that students did not read voluntarily or willingly during silent reading time. To emphasize further how little students seem to value reading as an enjoyable experience, less than half said, "When I grow up I will spend a lot of my time reading," on student survey, part one, number sixteen. The surveys overwhelmingly expressed a need to motivate students to read for pleasure.

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Probable Cause (LITERATURE)

Teachers are often bothered by the fact that students have a low motivation to read for pleasure. One significant cause is students' low self-concept as readers. Another significant cause is a low value of reading, which may stem from their lack of materials, previous enjoyable experiences, or models. Many researchers theorized that, "self-perceived competence and task value are major determinants of motivation and task engagement" (Gambrell et al., 1996 p. 518). Wigfield and McCann even suggested that students ask themselves motivational questions such as, "*Can* I do this?" and "Do I *want* to do this?" (1996-97).

Students' low self-concepts can negatively effect their motivation to read, and those "...who *believe* they are capable and competent...are more likely to outperform those who do not..." (Gambrell et al., 1996). In two articles sponsored by the National Reading Research Center, the authors concluded that there were eight dimensions of children's reading motivations. Of those, four related directly to students' self-concept. (Wigfield and McCann, 1996-97 and Sweet and Guthrie, 1996). The first dimension, efficacy, pertains to a student's belief that he/she can be a successful reader. When a student felt success he/she wanted to read again for enjoyment. Another dimension, challenge/mastery, implied that students were satisfied by the complexity of the ideas in the text and by deriving meaning from it. Students found more pleasure in reading when they could figure out the clues that authors leave. The dimension of recognition conveyed the student's need to be rewarded publicly for his/her effort and success in reading. Although extrinsic rewards should be limited they can eventually lead to a more intrinsic value of reading. Therefore, teachers

should provide opportunities for public acknowledgement. The fourth of these dimensions, competition, builds on the previous three as students strive to outperform their peers and themselves. Although students experience various degrees of each of these dimensions, fostering them can improve a student's overall self-concept (Wigfield and McCann, 1996-97 and Sweet and Guthrie, 1996).

When a student's low self-concept couples with a low-value of reading, the result can be a poor motivation to read. When students perceive reading as valuable and important, and have personally relevant reasons to read, they will engage in reading in a more planned and effortful manner (Gambrell, 1996). In revisiting the eight dimensions of children's reading motivations, the remaining four relate directly to a low value of reading. The first dimension, curiosity, is a student's own interest that compels him/her to explore new or favorite topics through reading. A lack of materials throughout their reading years can hinder this curiosity. Another dimension, enjoyment/involvement, implies a student's ability or desire to get lost in the text. Not having had prior positive experiences can deter a student from even trying to enjoy reading. The next dimension, interaction/sharing, refers to a student's socialization with family and friends, based on their reading experiences. Not having had previous social experiences or models could create disinterest in sharing what they have learned through reading. The fourth dimension relates directly to the teacher. Compliance/work avoidance can lead the student to engage in reading to please or displease the teacher. These dimensions may contribute to a student's lack of motivation in varying degrees, and although they may be weak, can be fostered to grow into a life-long desire to participate in literature. The three main causes for students' low value of reading can be identified as a lack of

materials, previous enjoyable experiences, and models, as were briefly mentioned above (Gambrell, 1996).

Students lack materials for a variety of reasons. Many come from print-poor homes where a home library may consist of very few books and/or reading materials at the student's level. Furthermore, some school libraries are in poor condition due to old, out-dated materials, worn books, small quantity of books, and under-qualified staff. For the same reasons, many classroom libraries fail to accommodate students. Although some homes and libraries may have a large quantity of books, the number is irrelevant when the interest and level of the students is not considered.

Some students do not find pleasure in reading because they have not had previous enjoyable experiences. When students are shut out or excluded from reading selection, they may become frustrated or apathetic. Students have not had guidance in choosing engaging books (Tipaldi, 2001). Many students simply do not enjoy typical school texts (Worthy, 1996). They are bored by the rote nature and end up labeling all reading experiences as boring. Students also have not been offered opportunities to share literature within an interesting or pleasurable context. They may not have been exposed to exciting teacher read-alouds, which might have encouraged them to read more on their own. The variety of technological media consumes a large portion of students' leisure time, and they therefore choose not to read (Voorhees, 1993). In this way, their ability to develop their own imagination may be hindered, and they may never learn the sheer joy of reading.

Enjoyable experiences with literature are often demonstrated or accompanied by positive reading models. These models should include parents, family members, teachers, other adults, and peers. Students who have not had models such as these have not been

exposed to such reading behaviors as thinking aloud, rereading, book talks/sharing, journaling, reading aloud, and simply reading for pleasure. "The earlier these habits and practices begin in the home, the more likely the child will become a life-long reader. 'A significant factor in the development of a positive attitude towards reading is directly linked to an early exposure to books and being read to by parents'" (Arthur, 1995, in Tipaldi, 2001, p 7). Students who have not had this exposure to positive reading models, along with their lack of previous enjoyable experiences, and worthwhile materials all contributed to their overall low value of reading in general.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Teachers and researchers have determined that students in general lack a motivation to read. "We know that children who are motivated and who spend more time reading are better readers" (Anderson, et al., 1988, 1992, 1990, as cited in Gambrell, 1996, p. 15). In order to increase this motivation the following solution strategies were implemented: an abundance and variety of books in the classroom, a book-friendly classroom environment, teachers who actively modeled reading behaviors, opportunities for interactions with others, and parent involvement.

Providing students with an abundance and variety of reading materials can motivate children to read. To encourage students to read, they needed to be provided with materials that interested them. When children have access to interesting reading material, they read more (Krashen, 1997/1998). In order to find out what specifically interests children, an interest survey should be administered to them (Tipaldi, 2001). This can determine not only what they are interested in, but can also determine children's self-concept as a reader (Gambrell, et al., 1996). When children self-select their reading material, they choose those materials that are most interesting to themselves (Gambrell, 1996). Furthermore, in a study conducted by

Schiefele (1991), students who were allowed and encouraged to choose their own reading material expended more effort in learning and understanding the material.

The teachers' classroom libraries should reflect student's interests with a wide-variety of books from which to choose. Some students who are capable readers and choose not to read, do not enjoy typical school texts and may even develop a life-long aversion to reading. (Worthy 1996) Some atypical inclusions may be: pattern/predictable books, poetry, rhyming books, speeches, plays, comics, series books, picture books, high interest non-fiction, high interest authors, science fiction, and sports novels (Worthy, 1996). Leal and Chamberlain-Solecki also suggest including Newberry Medal-winning books (1998). Other researchers highly encouraged "quality chillers" and scary stories (Richards, Thatcher, Shreeves, Timmons, and Barker, 1999). In these suggested types of books the reader would most likely find action, interesting details, and suspense, which are characteristics of "good reads" (Tipaldi, 2001). Providing this kind of reading can benefit not only the reluctant reader but also the more self-motivated reader.

When it is impossible to have all of these types of books in the classroom, teachers can utilize the school and public libraries. Although children will read more if they have more access to books, many children come from print-poor home environments (Ramos and Krashen, 1998). "Children get a substantial percentage of their reading material from libraries. When asked where they get their books to read, 30 to 97 percent of children mention some kind of library" (Krashen, 1993 in Krashen, 1997/1998, p. 19). When the school library cannot provide an adequate variety and environment, an alternate suggestion may be visits to the neighborhood public library (Ramos and Krashen, 1998).

In addition to an abundance and variety of reading materials in the classroom library, a book-friendly environment throughout the classroom must be established. Research shows that

children with a quiet, comfortable place to read will read more (Krashen, 1997/1998). A separate reading corner or center should be provided. One study even suggested a rotating selection of one hundred fifty texts from which students may choose (Fresch, 1995). A complement to the reading corner or center may be the addition of reading stations that provide supplementary means for students to enjoy literature. Those may include newspapers, magazines, games, films, audio and videotapes (Collins, 1996). Other suggestions include pillows, rocking chairs, puppets, posters, and bulletin boards (Gambrell, 1996). For younger readers stations may include magnetic letters, "Read the Room", interactive charts, flannel boards, and author centers (Henderson, 1996).

Another strategy to encourage reading would be for students to complete a class favorite list. Teachers can put up large charts with students' names, space for a title, and space for one, two, or three stars where students can critique the books they've read (Menon and Mirabito, 1999). Teachers can also put together notebooks that contain different lists of books under different genres that will encourage students to explore various topics (Pagés, 2001). Students should help teachers to compile this list.

Another way to promote reading would be for students to create individual bookmarks (See Appendix D) that could be laminated and used throughout the year to develop ownership in students' reading habits. Furthermore teachers may also choose to encourage students' reading by giving bookmarks as incentives as well as, reading stickers, and inexpensive books (Gambrell, 1996). Students have even suggested such incentives as prizes, bonus points, even payment of cash, and reduction of homework to allow more time for leisure reading (Tipaldi, 2001). To emphasize the value of books and reading, teachers may also keep a collection of books from which students may choose on their birthdays (Gambrell, 1996).

The greatest environmental factor teachers can provide students is giving students the time to read. And the greatest single motivation to get students to read is to simply give them the time to do so. When they begin to think of reading as a privilege they will make the choice to read whenever they can (Staton in Menon and Mirabito, 1999). To make sure they have the time, a regularly scheduled silent reading time should be established. At this time, everyone including the teacher can Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R). Some successful D.E.A.R. time strategies that others have used include: no interruptions, taking care of all health issues before or after D.E.A.R. time, not sitting by friends or enemies, no talking, ignoring distractions, and allowing students to choose their own reading material (Anderson, 2000 and Lee-Daniels and Murray, 2000). With continued practice and opportunities, students will start to see reading as discovery. They will go into it looking for insight and become naturally more curious (Frank, Dixon and Brandts, 20001) th , paving the way to become lifelong readers and learners.

It is a well-known fact to any teacher that what we do as models has huge impact on what students do. "If we serve as explicit reading models for our students and specifically associate reading with enjoyment, pleasure, and learning, our students will be encouraged to become voluntary lifelong readers" (Gambrell, 1996, p. 21). One way to serve as positive reading role models is to talk to students about books and show excitement about reading them (Humphrey, Lipsitz, McGovern, and Wasser, 1997). Although modeling reading during D.E.A.R. time is admirable, it is passive. There is almost always something worth sharing in what we read. Demonstrating that worth to students is an important means of modeling (Gambrell, 1996). Another idea for modeling would include reading a wide variety of materials aloud everyday. This promoted interest and motivated children to read not only from materials presented but also similar works (Dreher, 1998/1999). During read aloud the teacher should be sure to model voice

inflection, think aloud strategies, prediction, dramatic pauses, summarization, and exclamatory comments. With continued practice of these strategies, students will acquire them and share their ideas with each other, and use them to direct their reading.

Allowing students to interact with each other about their reading is fundamental to reading motivation (Turner and Paris, 1995). Social interaction is motivational in that it peaks students' curiosity and sparks further interest, increases their confidence in their own abilities, and increases both effort and persistence (Turner and Paris, 1995). Opportunities for social interaction include: partner reading, group discussion, reading aloud, student book talks, dramatization, book reports, literature circles or book clubs, and personal journaling. By allowing students these opportunities to share, they will become exposed to more books. The more materials that students are exposed to and know about, the more they will be likely to read (Gambrell, 1996).

Providing an opportunity to interact socially with another grade level about books can be accomplished through a book buddy program. Through a variety of fun reading activities, the book buddy program offers both grade levels some amount of success in reading, gives students something to look forward to, broadens the reading and sharing experiences, reinforces skills, and builds confidence (Pagés, 2001). Using a book buddy program can provide a relatively simple method to incorporate the important aspect of student interaction.

Not only are students influenced by their peers, but also by their families, who ideally would have been modeling reading habits in the home since infancy (Voorhees in Tipaldi, 2001). Humphrey, Lipsitz, McGovern, and Wasser suggest that parents, family, and community members offer an untapped contribution of resources in support of student readers (1997). Despite this, most teachers realize that parent involvement in reading at home is not this

extensive. To help determine the interest and involvement of each students' family, a simple survey can be sent home. Based on the results of the survey, a follow up letter containing suggestions for increased involvement at home could be supplied. Opportunities for parent involvement in school can be offered. Voorhees also concludes that when the school encourages parents to become involved in read aloud activities it is important to the students' attitudes and habits towards reading (Tipaldi, 2001). Inviting parents, community members, and other school staff to a Read-In is one such opportunity. Because learning does not stop at school, involving parents is crucial in increasing students' motivation to read.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of implementing various motivational strategies during the period of September 2001 through December 2001, the first, third, and fifth grade focus students will gain an appreciation for an increased interest in reading for pleasure, while the teacher will provide both the environment and opportunities that promote this interest.

In order to achieve the project objectives the following actions need to be implemented:

1) Outfitting the room with a wide variety of books and a book friendly environment
2) Active modeling of positive reading behaviors by the teacher
3) Providing ample opportunities for social interaction about books and reading
4) Involving parents in the reading process

Action Plan

Week One: Checklist, survey student, parent survey sent home, D.E.A.R. time introduced, teacher read-aloud with modeling, teacher's journal

Week Two: Make bookmarks, D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal

Week Three: Send letter home with suggestions attached, D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal, book buddies, book talks

Week Four: D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal, book buddies, book talks, student journal/response

Week Five: D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal, book buddies, book talks, student journal/response

Week Six: Teacher invites Read-In readers, D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal, book buddies, book talks, student journal/response

Week Seven: D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal, book buddies, book talks, student journal/response

Week Eight: Field trip to the library, students make invitations to Read-In readers, D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal, book buddies, book talks, student journal/response

Week Nine: Read-In (guest readers), students write thank you letters to guest readers, D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal, book buddies, book talks, student journal/response, teacher invites readers to next Read-In

Week Ten: D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal, book buddies, book talks, student journal/response, students make invitations for guest readers

Week Eleven: D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal, book buddies, book talks, student journal/response

Week Twelve: Read-In (guest readers), students write thank you letters to guest readers, D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal, book buddies, book talks, student journal/response, teacher invites guests to next Read-In

Week Thirteen: Field trip to library, D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal, book buddies, book talks, student journal/response

Week Fourteen: D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal, book buddies, book talks, student journal/response, students make invitations to guest readers

Week Fifteen: Read-In (guest readers), students write thank you letters to guest readers, D.E.A.R. time, read-aloud, teacher's journal, book buddies, book talks, student journal/response

Methods of Assessment

In order to properly measure the benefits of the action done, the following tools will be used:

1) Researchers' personal, daily journal entries
2) "Checklist for Student Involvement with Literature"
3) "Motivation to Read Profile" survey
4) Parent Survey

Each tool, with the exception of the journal, will be administered before and after the 15-week intervention to determine the increased existence of students' motivation to read for pleasure.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to motivate students to read for pleasure. Strategies chosen to positively affect this goal included: providing an abundance and variety of books in the classroom, a book-friendly classroom environment, a teacher who actively modeled, opportunity for interaction with peers, and parent involvement.

In order to outfit the classroom with a variety and abundance of reading materials, a student interest survey was administered within the first two weeks of school to determine students' personal reading preferences. Based on the findings, classroom libraries were enhanced accordingly. Different genres of literature were also supplied by the teacher for these libraries including magazine subscriptions, popular fiction, and non-fiction books. Additionally, two of the three classes took a field trip to the public library, where they toured the facility, received library cards, and had materials shared with them via read-alouds, story-telling, and book talks. The third class was unable to attend this experience due to conflicts with dates, and monetary restrictions.

Providing a book-friendly environment was accomplished foremost by ensuring daily silent reading time, called Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R), during which students were encouraged to self-select their reading materials. Students were provided with book

tubs containing numerous books in a variety of genres, topics, and reading levels, in addition to their school library books. Personal journaling time was built in as well, to help make their reading experience more meaningful. Journaling suggestions included "favorite part," "best/worst character," "interesting words/phrases," and similar topics. The physical classroom environments were specifically designed to be quiet and comfortable so as to be more conducive to an enjoyable reading experience. One classroom had a "little library" with beanbag chairs, a rocker, and stuffed animals. Another had a classroom library with interlocking squishy mats, a listening station, and a permanent book display rack. The third also had a classroom library which was furnished with crate chairs and cushiony pillows. Other physical features that enhanced the environment included a regularly changing selection of books at the students' disposal, "favorites" charts created by students, and various reading-themed posters. Additionally, the first grade class included other hands-on reading activity stations on a regular basis, including story related writing, a sight word spelling game, and a word-wall reading/spelling game. Contributing to students' personal environment, the teachers gave reading themed incentives such as birthday books, books as prizes, bookmarks, stickers, and gift certificates.

Modeling good reading practices and a positive attitude toward reading became an effective tool to help motivate the students. During D.E.A.R. time, the teachers demonstrated the expected student behaviors by joining in reading with them. Teachers even went so far as to post "Do Not Disturb" signs and D.E.A.R. time rules to punctuate the importance of this uninterrupted personal reading time. Following D.E.A.R. sessions, teachers frequently enthused about their reading materials, and even allowed students to do so as well. Conversely, sharing prior to D.E.A.R. time was also done. Teachers introduced

new materials through book talks ranging from simply examining a cover, to actually summarizing, or leafing through the pages and pictures together. In addition to modeling book talks in this way, students also enjoyed regular read-alouds in which the teachers demonstrated reading with expression and higher-level thinking skills. Finally, to show students that people beyond the classroom also enjoy reading, the classes hosted "Read-Ins." Some of the adult participants included parents, paraprofessionals, a custodian, principals, and other support staff. Students worked with these adults in small group literature circles, followed by D.E.A.R. time, and a sharing session.

The primary means of ensuring that students had ample opportunity for social interaction with literature was through Book Buddies. At one site, the participating first and third grade classes were paired; at the second site, the participating fifth grade paired with a kindergarten class. Some of the literature experiences shared by these classes included reading together, writing book extensions, making bookmarks, reading seasonal/theme books, compiling word lists from the readings, and visualizing stories. In the classrooms, at least once a week, peer sharing, either informally or formally followed D.E.A.R. time. During the informal interactions, partners or teams could discuss various aspects of their reading materials, share pictures or passages, and/or recommend favorites. Formal interactions involved writing and presenting book reports and projects.

The final strategy planned to achieve our goal involved parent participation. Parents, as well as other family members, were invited to "Family Reading Days" at both sites. Siblings of varying grade levels enjoyed sitting together with their families to relax and read. Monthly book orders were offered to all students. Teachers previewed these before sending them home, and also allowed students time to browse through them.

Within the first two weeks of school, parents were surveyed regarding their home reading practices. Based on the compilation of results the teachers recognized the wide ranging needs of the parents involved, and had a difficult time determining specific strategies and suggestions to accommodate *all* the areas of need. As a result, a single survey follow-up letter providing results and suggestions was difficult to assemble, and thus, was never distributed. In hindsight, the teachers realized the necessity of having addressed these needs in some fashion. The teachers later envisioned a weekly parent bulletin highlighting one specific area of need or concern at a time. Such memoranda would have addressed the specific strategies and recommendations determined by the researching teachers, via the parent surveys, to be most valuable in helping parents create more literature friendly households.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

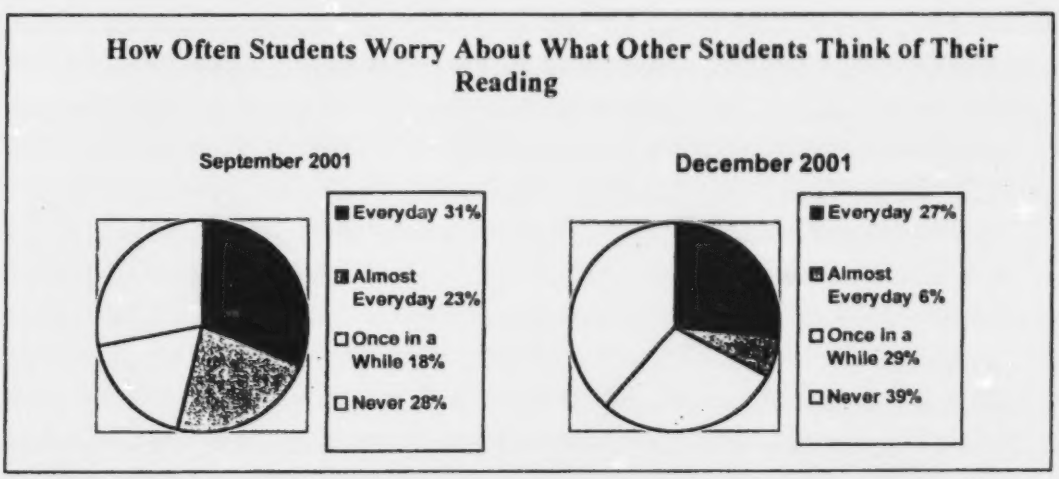
Upon completion of the action plan to increase students' motivation to read for pleasure, the teachers again administered the student surveys, completed their own checklists, and distributed parent surveys. The teachers also kept daily journals to record any changes in attitude and/or behavior regarding the problem. (Appendix E) These various tools were meant to identify and analyze areas of strength, weakness, and growth. Based on the evidence collected from these tools upon completion of the action plan, the interventions selected appeared to have had positive effects. The two identified problem areas of students' low self-concept and low value of reading seemed to have been minimized.

Evidence that students' low self-concept in reading improved became apparent on

Part 1 of the Student Survey, item seven, which states, "When I am reading by myself, I understand ___." Fifty-two percent of the students now thought they understood almost everything they read, compared to only forty-nine percent previously. In addition, item five, "When I come to a word I don't know, I can ___," showed forty-five percent of the students felt they could almost always figure it out, improving from an initial thirty-three percent. These data implied growth in students' reading ability as well as in their self-perception as readers. Furthermore, item nine stated, "I am ___," and showed that only twenty-eight percent of students considered themselves "poor" or "OK" readers, a decline of eight percent. These numbers seemed to indicate that as students became more confident in themselves as readers, their self-concepts also improved.

Moreover, item eleven, which read, "I worry about what other kids think about my reading ___," showed a significant decrease in students concerned about their peers' thoughts regarding their reading skills.

FIGURE 6



While students' self-concept improved, as they became more comfortable reading, either alone or with peers, they also became more willing to choose reading for pleasure as an

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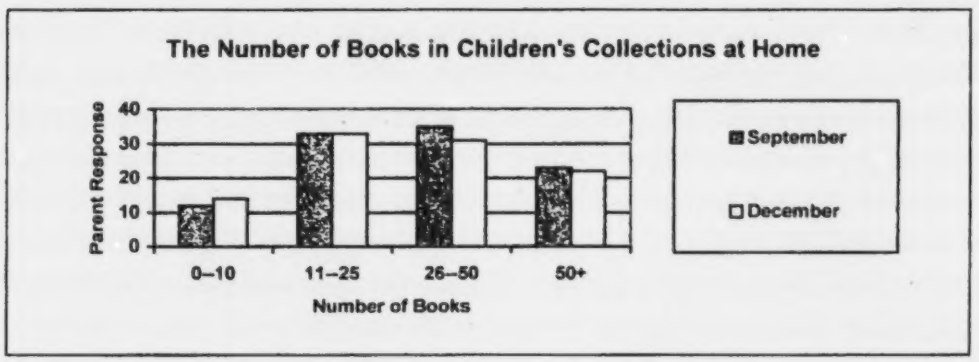
activity, as observed by the teachers in their daily journals.

Evidence from the pre- and post-survey tools indicated that the students experienced a low value of reading stemming from a lack of materials. On item fifteen of the Parent Survey, "How many books are in your child's book collection at home," parents revealed that their children still had a limited number of materials at their disposal at home.

FIGURE 7



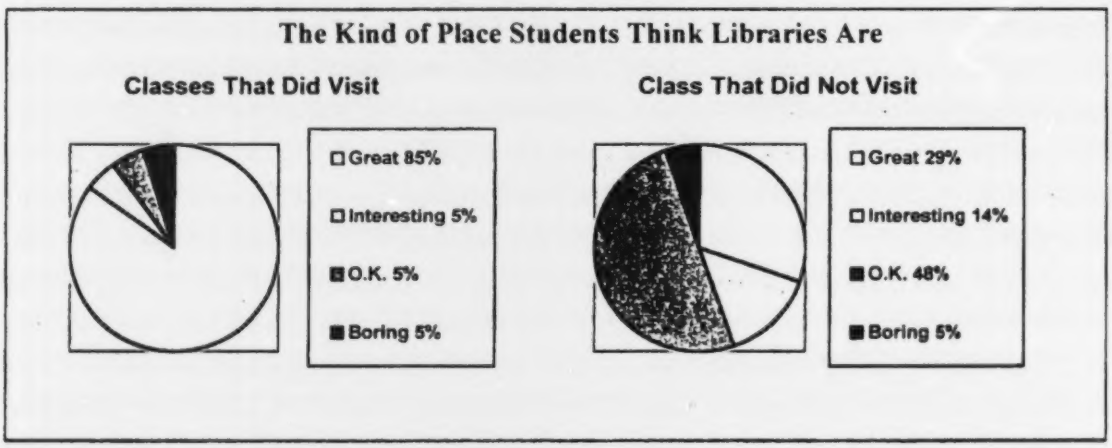
This continued lack of resources at home might suggest a cause for some of the students' inability to develop further interest in reading for pleasure. Had the teachers informed parents of the various strategies to encourage their children at home, these numbers would have improved, theoretically, thus having a greater overall impact on their motivation.

When parents were questioned about magazines as materials on items twelve and thirteen, "Do you subscribe to any magazines for adults/children," thirty-nine percent said yes to magazines for adults, and thirty-one percent for children, an increase of one percent and six percent, respectively. A possible reason for the increase could be carry-over from the classrooms, where all three of the teachers involved subscribed to various children's periodicals.

In addition, sixty-one percent of the parents responded yes to item eight, "Do you

visit your local public library," up from only fifty-one percent earlier. As impressive as this increase seems, the potential for even greater numbers could have been recognized had all three of the participating classrooms been able to attend the library field trip experience. As demonstrated in Figure 8, item ten of the Student Survey, Part 1, "I think libraries are ___," the two participating classes that did visit the library showed a markedly higher opinion of libraries in general, compared to the third class that was unable to attend.

FIGURE 8



The two classes that did go continued to demonstrate a desire to visit the library on their own, as further recorded in the teachers' daily journals.

Despite the lack of materials at home, and in accordance with the increased interest in visiting the library, when asked on item one of the Student Survey, Part 2, "Did you read anything at home yesterday," sixty percent were able to answer yes, an increase of ten percent from before. This showed that students who tried to were still able to find things to read.

Similarly, although parents were not modeling the positive reading behaviors at home themselves, the students still viewed family members as motivational, as evidenced by

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Student Survey, Part 2, item eight, "*Who* gets you really excited about reading?" Forty-eight percent of the students responded that it was a family member. Demonstrating that the motivation had become more intrinsic, nineteen percent revealed that their inspiration came from within. Furthermore, twenty-three percent admitted that the teacher was a motivating factor, attributed perhaps to the increased modeling strategies practiced at school.

Because this lack of models at home existed, the teachers decided to demonstrate more positive reading habits at school. They focused on four areas identified previously on their Checklist as trouble spots. Daily read-alouds of high quality and relevant literature became a priority, to model both good reading strategies as well as think-aloud techniques. The teachers also began to introduce materials regularly through book talks. Additionally, they demonstrated to students how to select books appropriate to their interest and reading levels. Most importantly, the teachers began to join the students in independent reading during D.E.A.R. time. Having these positive reading behaviors modeled for them at school helped to override the message implied at home that reading was unimportant.

The current data seemed to imply that students were now having adequate positive reading experiences, which in turn promoted their motivation to read for pleasure at both home and school. According to Parent Survey, item three, "How often do you read with your child," even fewer parents admitted on the follow-up survey to reading with their children three or more times a week. Despite this surprising statistic, parents did observe measurable increases in their children's independent reading at home. As proof, in response to item sixteen, "Does your child like to read at home," eighty-two percent of the parents believed that their children liked to read at home. Coincidentally or not, eighty-two percent further supported this idea by confirming that their children actually read three or more times a

week, on item seventeen, "How often does your child read at home?" In fact, an increase of eleven percent of the parents surveyed on item eleven, "Do you have a reading area at home," admitted that they did, showing that while they themselves may not have been modeling and/or using it, their children were. These data seemed to indicate that the enjoyment the students were finding in reading at school carried over into their home lives. Further proof of this was evidenced by the eighty-five percent of students who agreed, on Student Survey, Part 1, item two, "Reading a book is something I like to do" sometimes or often.

Other positive experiences the teachers provided the students, based on areas of concern on the preliminary Checklist, included community involvement in Read-Ins and Family Reading Days, daily self-choice silent reading time, and follow-up with opportunities to share responses to literature with their peers. Students demonstrated the benefits of these social interactions, as seen on item six of the Student Survey, Part 1, "I tell my friends about good books I read." Sixty-seven percent of the students verified that they do this some of the time or a lot. This seemed to reflect the previously mentioned notion that providing the students with positive reading experiences would result in them being more likely to choose reading as an enjoyable activity, which they did.

The post-survey tools indicated that the students now had an overall higher value of reading in general. As observed on the teachers' Checklists, the students were now reading voluntarily and willingly during D.E.A.R. time. Students were able to see the value of reading itself, as demonstrated in Student Survey, Part 1, item twelve, "Knowing how to read well is ___." Ninety-four percent of the students agreed that it is important or very important. In addition, eighty-four percent of the students envisioned themselves, on item

sixteen, "When I grow up I will spend ___," spending at least some or even a lot of their time reading. The post-surveys consistently showed growth in the students' motivation to read, but also implied the necessity of further and continued emphasis on inspirational opportunities to continue and promote this interest.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Considering the data and its analyses, the students' interest and desire to read for pleasure rose significantly. Students from each grade level routinely requested teacher read aloud time. They looked forward to the quiet and independence of D.E.A.R. time, and the socialization opportunity of sharing time. The teachers observed that the students consistently chose books appropriate to their own reading and interest levels. The library became a source of excitement for the first and third grades, especially after their visit to the public library. The teachers involved attributed much of this positive change in student behavior to a simple adjustment in the teachers' attitudes toward reading in general. This seemed to have had a contagious effect on their students. The amount of time and energy spent by the teachers promoting reading increased dramatically, as did the time allowed to students to explore and share literature. Because the teachers realized time alone would not itself spark motivation, they enthusiastically searched for and provided a wide variety of reading materials. These frequently changing resources supported the students' own interests which were discovered on their preliminary surveys.

The teachers attributed another part of the success of the solution strategy to the fact that the students' skills improved as the year progressed, thus having some positive influence

on their own self-concepts and self-esteem. This coupled with the teachers' added enthusiasm provided a rich ground for motivational growth. The teachers concluded that the time invested by themselves as well as their students on the various components of the solution strategy was well worth the effort for the dramatic differences observed afterward.

The increased interest and desire to read for pleasure, the teachers noted, had resulted solely from the strategies implemented at school by the classroom teachers. Their plan had been to get the parents involved in motivating their children to read, as well. Had recommendations and suggestions to parents been sent, as originally intended, the enthusiasm students were bringing home from school could have been magnified tremendously. Our recommendation, therefore, would be to constantly offer parents opportunities to participate and support the motivational growth of their children.

Further suggestions to teachers (and parents) for increasing this student interest in reading include: giving books as gifts, prizes, and incentives; shopping for new and used books in various places; exploring new authors, genres, and levels of materials; and supplementing reading materials with different, creative, and even unusual follow-up activities. Teachers should be sure to administer the Student Survey at the beginning of the year, and periodically throughout the year, since students' interests and abilities continuously grow and develop.

As teachers, we are obliged to open new doors to students. We have the ability to influence and empower them by the attitudes we convey. We also have the means to get parents involved in the development of their students and their interests. As two forces, we can accomplish more and maintain the spark.

Researchers' Perspective: Classroom I

In my classroom of first graders, I was originally concerned that the selected solution strategies may have a very limited effect because of the students' beginning reading status, especially since the plan was being implemented in the first part of the year before they had a chance to build their reading skills. I was incredibly and pleasantly surprised, however. I immediately discovered that the phrase, "attitude is everything," was totally applicable to my class.

The various aspects of the action plan were met with enthusiasm by nearly every student. Even those who were reluctant at first eventually came around and participated in their own way. I decided not to push them too hard, relying instead on their own intrinsic interests and those of their peers to drive them. D.E.A.R. time actually became something we looked forward to, rather than dreading. Our classroom's "little library" became one of the most frequently used free-time choices. Sharing time provided us all much insight and enjoyment. And students were openly and obviously excited for me to read aloud to them.

Again, "attitude is everything," and then some. I have not discontinued any part of our action plan because the components we implemented were, and continue to be, so successful. I intend to include the various strategies in the future as well, modifying any pieces to accommodate my students' interests and needs. My final goal is to get their parents involved more. As I see it, if I could make such a difference on my own at school, then together parents/guardians and I should be able to do even more!

Researcher's Perspective: Classroom III

In my third grade classroom, students initially did not seem willing to pick up reading material to read as a choice. With very little prompting, however, that attitude began to shift. After simply providing silent reading time during D.E.A.R., students' appetites for new and fresh material became ravenous. The challenge as a teacher was to keep that appetite sparked. Regularly rotating the materials displayed and talking about anything that I read best accomplished this feat. Sometimes bringing in an article from the newspaper and talking about it got students interested in reading the entire section from the paper. Sharing excerpts from books and then keeping those books available for perusal sparked interest tremendously.

Another challenge for me was to reach the interest of even the most reluctant reader. Sometimes I could reach those students by simply asking, "If you could read about anything, what would it be?" or "If I was going to buy the class a book, what would you like it to be?" and then finding that particular material. Also, when I allowed students who did like to read freely to share their excitement with those less enthusiastic students, more interest was sparked in both students.

Perhaps the students' most requested activity during the research period and beyond was when I read aloud to the class. Although this was intended to be everyday, if I skipped a day, students then relentlessly asked me when I was going to read. If I chose a book by an author that had written several books, I pointed out where to find these at the next library visit to help generate excitement. Students even brought in their favorite reading material from home or the library and asked me to read those aloud as well.

Other activities that had large impact in this classroom and that were easily implemented included sending home book orders at least monthly, providing birthday books as presents, keeping baskets of books with rotating materials at each team, and attending Book Buddies with the first grade class. Since these strategies and the others from our action plan were so simple to implement, I plan to continue these practices in future years.

Above all, probably the greatest lesson I gained was that the enthusiasm toward reading in general that I displayed was *the* most important motivating factor to encourage students to read for pleasure. The activities implemented were only as successful as the amount of genuine enthusiasm that I modeled each day.

Researcher's Perspective: Classroom V

In the fifth grade classroom, the students were very receptive to the new reading strategies implemented during the beginning of the year. One strategy that we began the year with was D.E.A.R. time. They did not respond well to this in the beginning and would talk instead of reading. Afterward, because of the variety of strategies implemented, they came in after lunch, sat down, and read silently for 20-minutes. They got really involved with their books and complained when we ran out of time. I remain so excited by the progress they made in reading for enjoyment. I continue to encourage students to read everyday, and have noticed that their reading scores have improved since the beginning of the year.

The strategies that I used in my classroom will be a permanent part of my teaching. I emphasized to the students that reading can be enjoyable if they find books that they like and

are at their reading level. In the end, I realized how important it is to get students excited about their own reading.

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Appendices

Parent Survey

Please mark the answer that best applies to YOU for each question, and return this survey to school as soon as possible. THANK YOU!

1. What is your favorite kind of book to read?

___Mysteries/Thrillers ___Sports
___Science Fiction ___Biographies
___Non-fiction ___Romances
___Historical ___Other_____

2. How often do you read for enjoyment?

___Every night ___1-2 times per week
___5-6 times per week ___Less than 1 time per week
___3-4 times per week

3. How often do you read with your child?

___Every night ___1-2 times per week
___5-6 times per week ___Less than 1 time per week
___3-4 times per week

4. How do you view yourself as a reader?

___Very good ___OK
___Good ___Poor

5. Do you like to read aloud?

___Yes ___No

6. What is the last good book that you read? _____

7. How often do you give books as gifts?

___Most of the time ___Almost never
___Sometimes ___Never

8. Do you visit your local library?

___Yes ___No

9. A library is a _____ place to be.

___Great ___OK
___Interesting ___Boring

10. Besides at home, where else do you read?

___Car ___Doctor's Office
___Stores ___Other
___Church

Parent Survey (continued)

11. Do you have a reading area at home?
___Yes ___No

If yes, please describe.

_____

12. Do you subscribe to any magazines for adults?
___Yes ___No

13. Do you subscribe to any magazines for children?
___Yes ___No

If yes, please describe.

_____

14. How do you help your child to read?
___By listening to him/her read
___By asking/answering questions
___By helping sound out words
___Other _____

15. How many books are in your child's book collection at home?
___0-10 ___26-50
___11-25 ___51+

16. Does your child like to read at home?
___Yes ___No

17. How often does your child read at home?
___Every night ___1-2 times per week
___5-6 times per week ___Less than 1 time per week
___3-4 times per week

18. Does your child discuss with you what he/she has read?
___Yes ___No

19. What are you child's favorite kinds of books to read?
___Mysteries/Thrillers ___Sports
___Science fiction ___Biographies
___Non-fiction(true) ___Romances
___Historical ___Other_____

Figure 2
Motivation to Read Profile

Reading survey

Name_____ Date_____

Sample 1: I am in _____.
- ☐ Second grade ☐ Fifth grade
- ☐ Third grade ☐ Sixth grade
- ☐ Fourth grade

Sample 2: I am a _____.
- ☐ boy
- ☐ girl

1. My friends think I am _____.
   - ☐ a very good reader
   - ☐ a good reader
   - ☐ an OK reader
   - ☐ a poor reader

2. Reading a book is something I like to do.
   - ☐ Never
   - ☐ Not very often
   - ☐ Sometimes
   - ☐ Often

3. I read _____.
   - ☐ not as well as my friends
   - ☐ about the same as my friends
   - ☐ a little better than my friends
   - ☐ a lot better than my friends

4. My best friends think reading is _____.
   - ☐ really fun
   - ☐ fun
   - ☐ OK to do
   - ☐ no fun at all

5. When I come to a word I don't know, I can _____.
   - ☐ almost always figure it out
   - ☐ sometimes figure it out
   - ☐ almost never figure it out
   - ☐ never figure it out

6. I tell my friends about good books I read.
   - ☐ I never do this.
   - ☐ I almost never do this.
   - ☐ I do this some of the time.
   - ☐ I do this a lot.

(continued)

Figure 2
Motivation to Read Profile (cont'd.)

7. When I am reading by myself, I understand _____.
   - ☐ almost everything I read
   - ☐ some of what I read
   - ☐ almost none of what I read
   - ☐ none of what I read

8. People who read a lot are _____.
   - ☐ very interesting
   - ☐ interesting
   - ☐ not very interesting
   - ☐ boring

9. I am _____.
   - ☐ a poor reader
   - ☐ an OK reader
   - ☐ a good reader
   - ☐ a very good reader

10. I think libraries are _____.
   - ☐ a great place to spend time
   - ☐ an interesting place to spend time
   - ☐ an OK place to spend time
   - ☐ a boring place to spend time

11. I worry about what other kids think about my reading _____.
   - ☐ every day
   - ☐ almost every day
   - ☐ once in a while
   - ☐ never

12. Knowing how to read well is _____.
   - ☐ not very important
   - ☐ sort of important
   - ☐ important
   - ☐ very important

13. When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, I _____.
   - ☐ can never think of an answer
   - ☐ have trouble thinking of an answer
   - ☐ sometimes think of an answer
   - ☐ always think of an answer

14. I think reading is _____.
   - ☐ a boring way to spend time
   - ☐ an OK way to spend time
   - ☐ an interesting way to spend time
   - ☐ a great way to spend time

(continued)

Figure 2
Motivation to Read Profile (cont'd.)

15. Reading is _____.
- ☐ very easy for me
- ☐ kind of easy for me
- ☐ kind of hard for me
- ☐ very hard for me

16. When I grow up I will spend _____.
- ☐ none of my time reading
- ☐ very little of my time reading
- ☐ some of my time reading
- ☐ a lot of my time reading

17. When I am in a group talking about stories, I _____.
- ☐ almost never talk about my ideas
- ☐ sometimes talk about my ideas
- ☐ almost always talk about my ideas
- ☐ always talk about my ideas

18. I would like for my teacher to read books out loud to the class _____.
- ☐ every day
- ☐ almost every day
- ☐ once in a while
- ☐ never

19. When I read out loud I am a _____.
- ☐ poor reader
- ☐ OK reader
- ☐ good reader
- ☐ very good reader

20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel _____.
- ☐ very happy
- ☐ sort of happy
- ☐ sort of unhappy
- ☐ unhappy

Motivation to Read Profile (Part 2)

Name_____ Date_____

1. Did you read anything at home yesterday? _____ What was it?_____
_____

2. Do you have anything here at school today that you are reading (in your desk, tub, locker, mailbox, book bag)? _____
Tell me about it/them. _____
_____

3. What is your favorite kind of book to read (i.e., scary, mystery, non-fiction/real-life, history, science fiction, sports, adventure, biography, friendship, etc.)? _____
What is your second favorite? _____
What do you like about these kinds of books? _____
_____

4. Tell me about your favorite author. _____
_____

5. Do you like to read magazines? _____ Which one is your favorite? _____
Why? _____
_____

6. Can you think of anything right now that you would *like* to read? _____ Tell me about it. _____
_____
_____
How did you find out about it? _____
_____

7. *What* gets you really excited about reading? _____
_____
Why?_____
_____

8. *Who* gets you really excited about reading? _____
_____
Why? _____
_____

9. What do you think you have to learn and do to be a good reader? _____
_____
_____

Motivation to Read Profile (Part 1)
First Grade

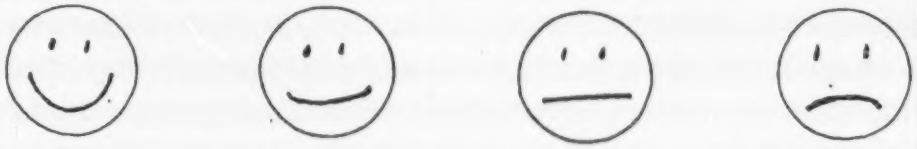
Name _____ (boy / girl) Date _____

1. My friends think I am a _____ reader.

2. Reading is something I like to do.

3. I read _____.

4. My best friends think reading is _____.

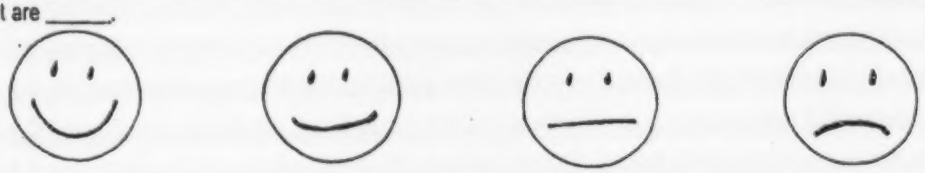


5. When I come to a word I don't know, I can _____ figure it out.

6. I tell my friends about good books I read.

7. When I am reading by myself, I understand _____.

8. People who read a lot are _____.



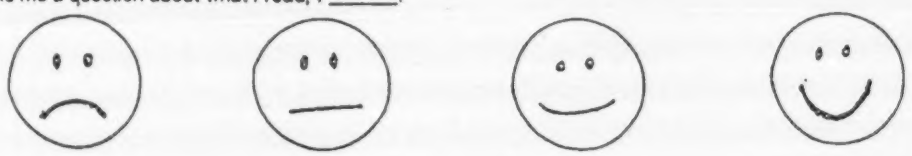
9. I am a _____ reader.

10. I think libraries are _____.

11. I worry about what other kids think about my reading _____.

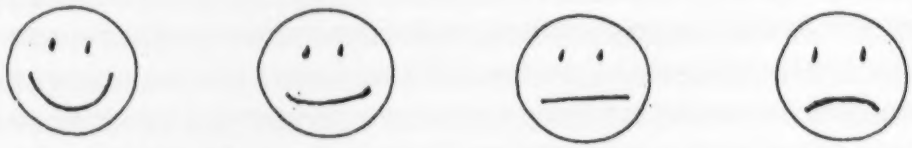
12. Knowing how to read well is _____.

13. When my teacher asks me a question about what I read, I _____.

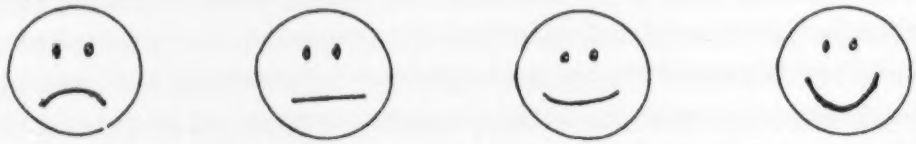


14. I think reading is a _____ way to spend time.

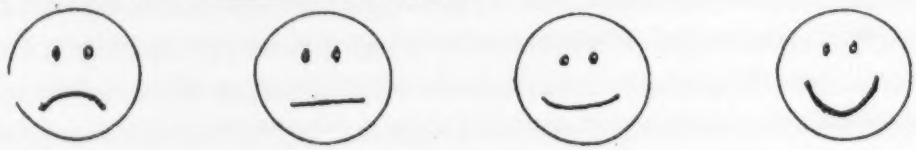
15. Reading is _____ for me.



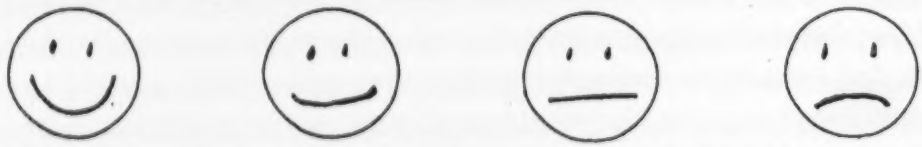
16. When I grow up, I will spend _____.



17. When I am in a group talking about stories, I _____ talk about my ideas.



18. I would like for my teacher to read books out loud to the class _____.



19. When I read out loud, I am a _____ reader.

20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I am _____.

Motivation to Read Profile (Part 2)

Name_____ Date_____

1. Did you read anything at home yesterday? _____ What was it?_____
_____

2. Do you have anything here at school today that you are reading (in your desk, tub, locker, mailbox, book bag)? _____
Tell me about it/them. _____
_____

3. What is your favorite kind of book to read (i.e., scary, mystery, non-fiction/real-life, history, science fiction, sports, adventure, biography, friendship, etc.)? _____
What is your second favorite? _____
What do you like about these kinds of books? _____
_____

4. Tell me about your favorite author. _____
_____

5. Do you like to read magazines? _____ Which one is your favorite? _____
Why? _____
_____

6. Can you think of anything right now that you would *like* to read? _____ Tell me about it. _____
_____
_____
How did you find out about it? _____
_____

7. *What* gets you really excited about reading? _____
_____
Why?_____
_____

8. *Who* gets you really excited about reading? _____
_____
Why? _____
_____

9. What do you think you have to learn and do to be a good reader? _____
_____
_____

Appendix C

Checklist for Student Involvement with Literature

Behavior	Yes	No	Comments
Reading			
Student reads voluntarily and willing	___	___	_____
Student enjoys reading	___	___	_____
Student reads during silent reading time	___	___	_____
Student reads for entertainment	___	___	_____
Student reads for information	___	___	_____
Student reads a variety of books and poems	___	___	_____
Response to Literature			
Student talks intelligently about books read or heard	___	___	_____
Student shares responses to books with peers	___	___	_____
Student is attentive during read-aloud sessions	___	___	_____
Student is able to accept that different people may have different responses to the same story	___	___	_____
Student knows how to select appropriate books for independent reading	___	___	_____
Student is developing personal preferences in literature	___	___	_____
Student tries new book genres	___	___	_____
Physical Plant (Classroom)			
Desks are arranged to promote student-to-student discussion	___	___	_____
Room provides quiet area for reading	___	___	_____
Reading area is well lighted	___	___	_____
Reading area has comfortable seating	___	___	_____
Reading area is well organized and orderly	___	___	_____
Student response projects are displayed	___	___	_____
Materials			
Classroom library is adequate in			
scope (variety of genres)	___	___	_____
depth (variety of books within a genre)	___	___	_____

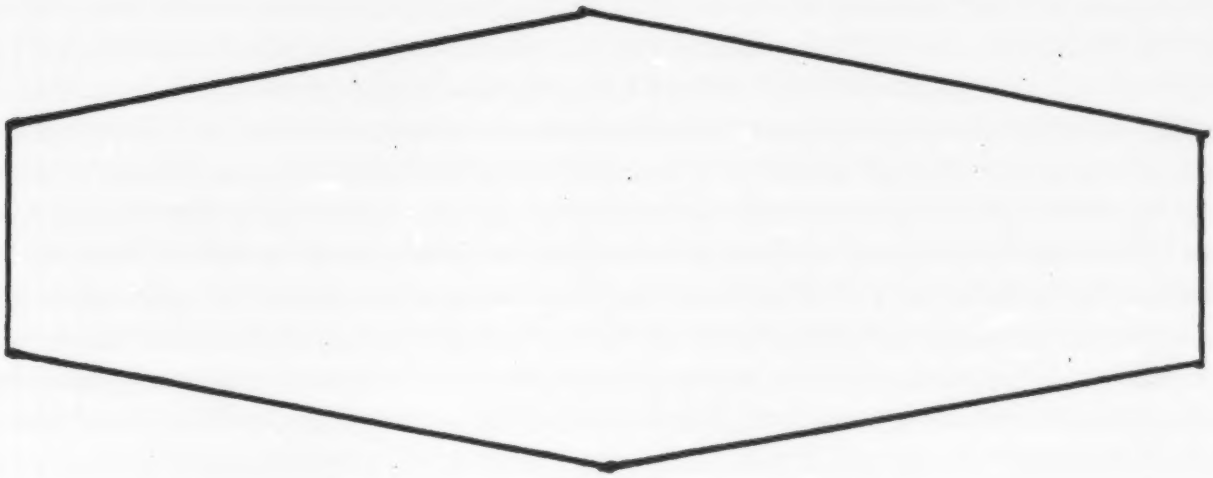
quality (light reading for entertainment to excellent quality for study)	—	—	_____
providing for varying reading abilities	—	—	_____
materials continued			
recent books	—	—	_____
multicultural and international books	—	—	_____
poetry collections	—	—	_____
Classroom has a temporary collection	—	—	_____

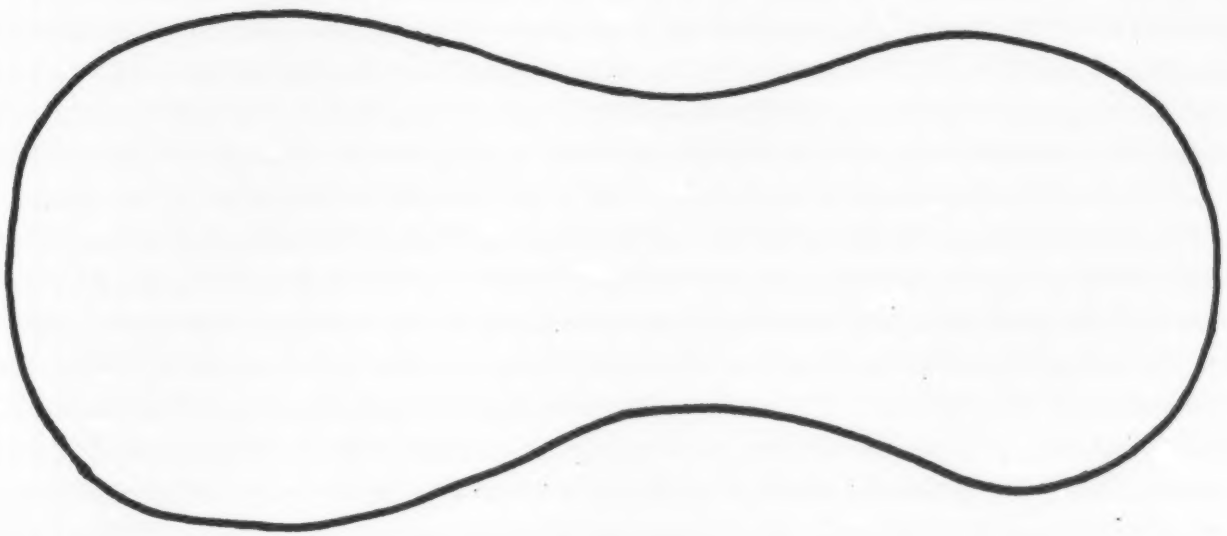
Scheduling

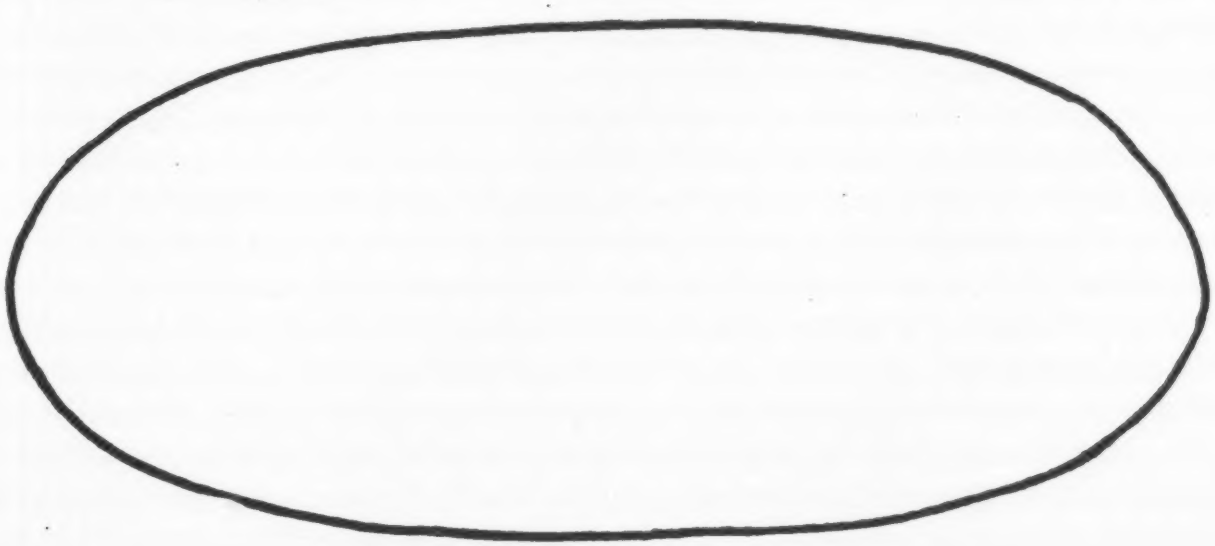
Time is provided for self-choice reading every day	—	—	_____
Time is provided for browsing and selection of books regularly	—	—	_____
Time is provided for response to literature	—	—	_____

Checklist for Promoting Literature through Teaching Activities

Teaching Activity	Yes	No	Comments
Making Literature Enjoyable			
Read aloud daily (high quality literature)	___	___	_____
Select books for read-aloud that reflect			
students' interests	___	___	_____
represent a wide variety of genres	___	___	_____
represent outstanding examples of each genre	___	___	_____
Share poetry orally on a regular basis	___	___	_____
Share stories through storytelling	___	___	_____
Motivating Students to Read			
Introduce books regularly through booktalks	___	___	_____
Encourage student response to literature			
by asking open-ended or divergent questions	___	___	_____
by encouraging varied responses	___	___	_____
oral response	___	___	_____
written response	___	___	_____
Allow students to choose books for independent			
reading	___	___	_____
Take class to school library weekly or more	___	___	_____
Take class to public library for a field trip	___	___	_____
Invite a librarian to your class to booktalk			
and tell stories	___	___	_____
Modeling Reading Behaviors			
Read during silent reading time	___	___	_____
Talk enthusiastically about books read	___	___	_____
Show students how to select books	___	___	_____
Reaching Beyond the Classroom			
Send read-aloud suggestions to parents	___	___	_____
Encourage parents to visit library with their children	___	___	_____
Invite parents and community leaders to be			
Guest readers for read-aloud	___	___	_____







Actions Taken:

Reflection:

PLUSES (+)	MINUSES (-)	INTERESTING (?)

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